


First Norwich Harbor sunset cruise sold out

Published August 14, 2018 6:21PM | Updated August 14, 2018 11:54PM

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Norwich — The Thames River Heritage Park water taxi will take a detour from its usual rounds connecting New London and Groton sites Thursday to head up river to Norwich Harbor for its first sunset cruise down the Thames River departing from the Howard T. Brown Memorial Park.

The effort has proved to be a success, with Thursday's 90-minute tour, hosted by tour guide and Epicure Brewing principal Jason Vincent, sold out as of Tuesday afternoon, said Wendy Bury, executive director of the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition. The coalition is running four sunset cruises this summer, with the other three departing from Fort Trumbull in New London and heading up river with different themes. The first New London cruise was held July 19.

"This is the first tour that launches from and returns to Norwich," Bury said. "We're really excited to be utilizing the Thames as it is, connecting the entire region."

This is the second season for the sunset cruises. Bury said there was interest in running a cruise from Norwich Harbor last year but it couldn't be arranged. With the advanced sell-out — 40 seats at \$50 per person — Bury said future Norwich cruises are likely.

Two more cruises are scheduled for this summer, Sept. 6 and Sept. 13, both departing from Fort Trumbull State Park in New London. Information and reservations are available at the Southeastern Connecticut Cultural Coalition's website, **www.CultureSECT.org** (<http://www.CultureSECT.org>).

Thursday's Norwich cruise will have the theme "Craft & Drafts in the Rose City," with Vincent discussing Norwich history, various development along the riverfront and his own business, Epicure Brewing on Franklin Street. Epicure will provide samples to cruise participants. Olde Tymes Restaurant in Norwich will provide the food, and the event is co-sponsored by the Savings Institute Bank and Trust.

"I'm excited to show off Norwich from this view," Vincent said. "Not too many people get to see it from the river."

Norwich Harbor Management Commission Chairman H. Tucker Braddock is a strong advocate of promoting use of the water. Braddock hopes to renew efforts to create a new boat launch in or near the harbor to improve safety at Brown Park, converting the launch there into a kayak and canoe launch.

"It's a wonderful thing," Braddock said of the water taxi tour. "The more people who get on the water, the better it is. Fishing, kayaking, and boats coming up the river, it's a good thing."

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